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SUBJECT: HIZB DAWA ISLAMIYA PERSPECTIVES IN BASRAH

CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah,  
State Department.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) Regional Coordinator (RC) and Poloff on April 6 met with Amer Al-Khuzaei, field coordinator for the Basrah branch of the Hizb Dawa Islamiya party and Deputy Health Minister, to discuss the Dawa party's views on various issues. Poloff on April 14 conducted a similar conversation with Abu Fatma, member of the party's provincial council. The party members presented the history of Dawa to emphasize its stature and stressed the Dawa party's key role in making democracy succeed in Iraq. Closely tied to this was their insistence that the election of Ibrahim Al Jafari as prime minister would be essential to the democratic process.

2. (C) Al-Khuzaei described the history of the Dawa movement and its commitment to democracy. The RC asked about the Basrah Provincial Council's boycott of the British and Danes and the effect it was having on reconstruction democracy-building projects. Al-Kuzaei said that he did not approve of the boycott, but he also emphasized that Coalition Forces needed to increase the transparency of its actions, particularly relating to the detention of Iraqi citizens.

3. (C) Both party members asserted that the Dawa party's rich political tradition made it a unique partner for the Coalition Forces. Abu Fatma insisted that there was a misperception that Dawa supports Iran because of a close connection it forged with Dawa party members who spent many years in exile there. Poloff asked Abu Fatma if Dawa attracted support from youth. Initially Abu Fatma insisted that it did, but when pressed admitted that Dawa did not fire their imagination.

4. (C) The prime message from the two Dawa members was how important it was that Ibrahim Al-Jafari remain as prime minister. They argued that it was the Unified Iraqi Coalition majority that decided on him as prime minister, and any deviation from this election would be inimical to democracy. Al-Khuzaei and Abu Fatma equated a failure of the Jafari candidacy to an unconstitutional action. RC responded by asserting that a possible failure of Jafari to become prime minister would not contravene the Iraqi constitution and provided analogies to the U.S. political system. Al-Khuzaei commented that Jafari's personality was not to his liking, but Jafari's selection as prime minister would prove democracy in Iraq a success.

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